

A

0  
0  
0  
8  
6  
0  
8  
7  
4  
7



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

AT   
OXFORD  
BY  B.W.  
HENDERSON



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES





AT OXFORD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE LIFE AND PRINCIPATE OF THE  
EMPEROR NERO

CIVIL WAR AND REBELLION IN THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE

AT INTERVALS

# AT OXFORD

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

BERNARD W. HENDERSON

M.A., D.LITT., EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD

METHUEN & CO. LTD  
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.  
LONDON

*First Published in 1913*



PR

6015

H 381a

AMICIS

H. C. H. B.

A. J. D.

91668

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
AT OXFORD . . . . .	I
A DOUBT . . . . .	5
FOR JOY THAT A MAN — . . . . .	8
THE LAST DAY . . . . .	11
SURRENDER . . . . .	13
SORRISE . . . . .	18
IN VAIN? . . . . .	22
SIR BRANDRETH . . . . .	24
THE RAILWAY CUTTING . . . . .	27
ST LEVAN . . . . .	30
BY THE CORNISH SEA . . . . .	32
LAMORNA BAY . . . . .	37
AT NIGHT . . . . .	39
SURGE OF THE SEA . . . . .	40
THE PASSAGE OF LIFE . . . . .	42
EARTH TOKENS . . . . .	51
AT CARLISLE . . . . .	53
THE FULNESS OF LIFE . . . . .	59
THE VOICE OF THE HILLS . . . . .	61
O FORTUNATOS! . . . . .	64
THE ROSE . . . . .	67
ON CHRISTMAS EVE . . . . .	68

	PAGE
A WEST-COUNTRY CAROL . . . . .	71
IN EXETER COLLEGE CHAPEL . . . . .	73
NEW YEAR'S EVE . . . . .	76
AVE ATQUE VALE . . . . .	78

## AT OXFORD

AUTUMN again at winter's call is  
speeding,  
Decking her path with crimson and with  
gold.  
Her ripened fruit she gathers, little heeding  
All we had hoped for when the year grew  
old.

Yonder round pinnacle and tower wheel-  
ing  
The rooks make brief and melancholy  
call;  
And softly, as some secret grief revealing,  
The robin sings from ivy-clustered wall.

To-morrow sees our tide of life returning,  
Flooding old ways anew with eager  
youth;  
Hope, strength, ambition, resolution  
burning  
To have the mastery in strife for truth.

But now the surge sounds faint and distant,  
seeming

This evening-tide to draw to lowest ebb;  
And Memory with shadows weaves her  
dreaming :

Shot through with colours bright and  
grey her web.

Half-seen the pathway, rock and mountain  
cleaving ;

Sombre the crags which guard the castle  
fast

Where, grave, majestic, kindly, dwells she,  
weaving

In dim bare wind-swept chamber from  
the past.

---

Brother Marlburians, comrades loyal ever  
To school and college, linked to me as  
friends,

Earnest in play and valiant in endeavour—  
Surely God cherishes whom alone He  
spends !

One from the threshold of a full life's  
measure,

Summoned by death to pass to the un-  
known,

Offered his sacrifice, long-drawn pain for  
pleasure,  
Fared with a smile forth to the dark  
alone.

One by the shores of Tropic lake and  
ocean  
Joyously gave of manhood's days the  
best,  
Leaning on Christ in passion of devotion  
Won from his Lord the martyr's crown  
and rest.

---

Youth in its happiness, heedless of sorrow,  
Fashioning dreamings and scornful of  
fears,  
Yesterday's promise, forgotten to-morrow,  
Youth is the tapestry woven of years.

Once with their laughter the college was  
ringing ;  
Theirs once to strive for its honour and  
fame ;  
Theirs in its Chapel to worship and,  
singing,  
Glorify God and rejoice in His name.

All here are knit to the ages before them,  
Fashioned and shaped by their working  
and plan,  
Hand on to others the task, and implore  
them,  
Sons of the College, they too play the man.

Ah, could but love from its fetters be  
parted,  
Bidding defiance to space and to time,  
How would they muster, the lads eager-  
hearted,  
Answer the roll-call from every clime.

What though ensnared by some task never-  
ending  
We may forget those who pass from our  
ken;  
What though the duty of life and its  
spending  
Prison their thoughts to the labours of  
men;

Springtime for sowing: though harvesting  
tarry  
Surely the reaper hath joy of past days;  
Back to the city of Youth shall he carry  
His fruits for her glory, his deeds for  
her praise.



## A DOUBT

(OR AN APOLOGIA?)

“ Num his continetur salus reipublicæ ? ”

**W**E ponder over manuscripts and peer  
into antiquities ;  
We ask if one authority with all the rest  
agrees ;  
We plod along the stony ways of centuries  
all dim to us ;  
Does the health of the Republic rest on  
studies such as these ?

When faintly from the darkness where in  
slums of dirt and misery  
In pitiless enslavement man must drain  
of life the lees,  
We may hear the children crying, if at  
times we idly hearken—  
Can the Country in her peril turn for  
aid to such as these ?

Hearken idly: for how sorry is the help  
that we could offer;

Our thoughts are with philosophy and  
language, if you please;

And if Mammon rides triumphant over  
boyhood's health and happiness,

What use a student's protest on behalf  
of such as these?

And all the while in India, in Africa, in  
Canada,

Wherever man is working in our Empire  
overseas,

The youngsters who have been with us,  
have learnt with us, have played  
with us,

They live their lives apart from us 'mid  
problems such as these.

Or lads we loved and cherished (though  
they never dreamt it of us),

Straight open-hearted schoolboys, quick  
to admire or tease,

The friends of school and College days,  
they pass and leave us wondering

Why we should tarry longer when death  
claims such as these.

There's a barren barren desert of indul-  
gence, sport, and pleasure,  
Where the longer dwell the sojourners  
the colder is the breeze :  
But we for all our learning, our questing,  
our teaching,  
Are we truly any wiser than the multi-  
tude of these ?

But Plato pleads sagaciously that "each  
man to his labour"  
Makes the whole machine run smoothly  
to the joy of him who sees.  
Nor sympathy nor intellect can bring all  
men to Paradise ;  
Why should we be tormented by ques-  
tionings like these ?

Yet when the toil is over and the lamp of  
life burns dimly,  
I wonder what will cheer us : will repose  
and learnèd ease ?  
Or the voice of One who cryeth, though  
our souls be let and hindered,  
"Inasmuch as ye have done it to just  
one, the least of these" ?

FOR JOY THAT A MAN —

**D**AWN, hard merciless dawn, and a  
wintry light on the city  
And hurrying steps of the boy, toiling  
for home and for bread;  
Boy-brother, sturdily loyal, hungry, yet  
asking not pity  
But work and some measure of joy ere  
boyhood be sped.

What will you make of him, England, this  
son of yours, “heir to the Ages”?  
Ages of Faith, maybe? Is it Faith that  
passes him by  
With a word of praise on the lips, but with  
eyes intent on the pages  
Of ledger of Profit and Loss? Why  
listen the children’s cry?

Where else is your duty, England, the task  
of a surety the Mother’s,  
Aged, careworn, and wise, “Empress  
from Tropic to Pole”?

FOR JOY THAT A MAN — 9

Empress? And here at your feet is your  
son in his toiling for others,  
Little ones, lest they go hungry. Is it  
preaching must save his soul?

“Not walls and not bulwarks but men”!  
Are not these the men for your saving?  
But God send the need come slowly if  
you tend them no better, your sons.  
Ill housed, ill fed, ill apparelled—will you  
call these lads to go braving  
Peril and wounding and death 'mid the  
roar of the enemy's guns?

Yes, they will answer the call, but alas for  
the mothers who bare them,  
And woe for the weary days and the  
desolate nights, as they roam  
Unloved, unguarded, unheeded, for hunger  
and sin to ensnare them,  
The wastage of life, your children, Eng-  
land, sons of the home!

Boyhood resolute, daring, defiant of danger  
and sorrow,  
Boyhood following hard in the steps of  
those perished before:

10 FOR JOY THAT A MAN —

What will you make of him, England, this  
lad who must guard you to-morrow?  
For the son who is lost God gives you,  
Mother, no more.

## THE LAST DAY

**D**ESOLATE gloom of a sunless day  
(Ah, but the waves are breaking  
coldly!)

Can there be light where he passed away?  
(Ah, but he faced death's terror boldly!)

Out from the pain thou bringest release?  
(Hearken the cry of the sea-bird's  
wailing!)

But how to fatherless children peace?  
(What profit to mend a grief by rail-  
ing?)

Let the storm rage and be done with  
pity!  
(See o'er the rocks the cruel foam  
leaping!)

Back to the struggle and fret of the  
city!  
(Leave we our dead to God's quiet  
keeping.)

Golden the sunset : the long day is done,  
    (Ever at evening the sea finds rest !)  
The passion of sorrow for ever is gone,  
    (We know nothing and God knows  
    best).



## SURRENDER

### I

**H**AST thou a song, O singer,  
A song of the happier Past—  
When man was valiant, nor shunned to slay,  
And the rush-strewn hall in the fire-light  
gay  
Re-echoed with laughter and minstrel's lay,  
And youth was aflame for love and the fray,  
And maidens' hearts beat fast?  
The present we hate, for blood runs cold,  
All hearths are ashen grey to behold,  
When men are all selfish seekers for gold:  
Methinketh the world is waxen old  
And the wind blows drearily over the wold.  
Is there courage in youth?  
Bid him stay:  
For the days of the heroes are long since  
dead  
Now that "Give us this day another man's  
bread"  
Is the prayer of each heart all secretly said:

Let the hungry go weep, we will raise our  
 head  
 A' top of our fellows ; for mercy is fled  
 From the day  
 When Mammon is Master of truth.

## II

Nay—there is pity enough  
 In measure pressed down, running o'er.  
 Why malign ye the age of new lore,  
 Of the franchise, the Trust, and the rough  
 Whose wrongs we must hasten to heal  
 And demand of his victim he feel  
 Like zest for his wrongdoer's weal ?  
 How idle the fears  
 That the Present no Chivalry knows,  
 No honour rewards, praise bestows  
 On those whom its fancy admires  
 Though little it reck of its sires !  
 There are tears,  
 Tears for the rogue, the traitor, the  
 thief,  
 Tears in plenty for advertised grief.  
 Is the nation at war ?  
 See the gibes and rejoicings at English  
 defeat !

And the blood of the English as dirt in the  
street,  
While the foe for forgiveness we beg, and  
entreat  
That he let us defame our own courage,  
our fleet,  
And our army afar.

## III

Why is the singer dumb,  
That he sings not the song of the Present ?  
See his hearers thronging : they come  
From the ruined village, the slum,  
Vice, virtue, all shivering, numb  
With the biting of rage are some ;  
But others are flaunting in finery's shame  
Revelling, feasting, girding at blame,  
The harlot, the temptress, the wanton, no  
name  
Of despair and reproach but they gaily  
acclaim.  
For God maketh His sun to shine all the  
same

On the evil and good.  
So here for the minstrel's song is food :  
No ballad antique of creeds decaying,  
Of faiths outworn and past all praying,

Of children's glee when the world went  
    Maying,  
Of mariners' quests, of knights arraying  
    For the Cross and its war with the  
    Crescent,  
    Themes stripped from Time's loom.

## IV

Let the dead Past bury its dead.  
    Sing us this song instead,  
Of the hurrying flood of this fast-rushing  
    life  
O'erwhelming us all 'neath the waters of  
    strife,  
Boy, maiden, and lover, child, husband, and  
    wife :  
    The song of To-day with its hopes  
    and its fears.  
For have we not suffered our burden  
    of years ?  
Let our dead Past bury its dead !  
We have fought and striven and  
    shed  
Our life-blood the wide world  
    through :  
Whence again then to dare and to  
    do ?

Why call us anew  
Our souls with strength to endue,  
To be strong with the power of a living  
faith  
To welcome hardship and mock at death?  
Nay—lull us to rest.

Lull us to rest: we are past our prime:  
Let us garner our husks 'gainst the coming  
time  
Of our Winter's eld: no song sublime  
Should wake our hearts in the minstrel's  
rhyme,  
And sleep is best

## SORRISE

SORRISE, Sorrise,  
Where tarriest thou, Sorrise ?  
There's a gleam on the tarn in the dark of  
the hills,  
And dim through the dusk of the morning  
the rills  
Shine white as they leap ; night is past and  
its ills.  
Awake, Sorrise.

Now fast down the fell side the shadows  
in flight  
Haste back to their home in the bosom of  
night,  
And the mountains are bathed in a glory of  
light ;  
O haste thee, Sorrise.

The bracken's aglow with its russet and  
gold,  
Now day wakes in laughter o'er hamlet  
and fold ;

There is joy in the hills, joy to-day as of old.  
Awake, Sorrise.

See the dragon-fly darting all amber and  
green,  
A jewel of splendour, the rushes between ;  
No day could be fairer of all that have  
been :  
Comest thou not, Sorrise ?

---

Sorrise, Sorrise,  
Mindest thou not, Sorrise,  
The long summer day when we wandered  
forth free,  
God's sky blue above us, an infinite sea  
Of rejoicing embracing us two, you and me,  
Sorrise ?

So we climbed through the heather the steep  
of High Raise,  
Where around and beneath us, spread out  
to our gaze,  
Lay mountain and valley, all bright for  
God's praise :  
See-est thou not, Sorrise ?

Far away to the eastward below us there  
gleamed

Winandermere's waters : a vision they  
seemed

Of the river of crystal of God's own  
redeemed :

When comest thou, Sorrise ?

Now autumn is monarch and summer is  
flown ;

Why wilt thou not hearken ? I stand here  
alone ;

Yet a little, night falls, and the journey is  
done,

Sorrise.

---

Sorrise, Sorrise,

Bethink thee, Sorrise,

How we dreamed of the son God should  
give us, that he

In his beauty of boyhood these mountains  
should see,

And we stand here together in worship, we  
three

Together, Sorrise.



And the strength of the hills should be his,  
and the song  
Of the rivers inspire with courage and strong  
Loyal faith for his battle with sin and with  
wrong ;

Rememberest thou not, Sorrise?

If death be the ending, the pageant of  
earth

The glory of sunrise, each day's happy  
birth,

The spring and its promise, how mocking  
their mirth ;

Comest thou never, Sorrise ?

The long day is ending: its hours are fled ;  
I am lonely, alone with my God and my  
dead ;

In the infinite stillness God's mercy is shed,  
And thou comest, Sorrise.

## IN VAIN?

WILL you not tell me  
What it means to love you?  
Once I thought it Paradise  
In the Heaven above you.

Now to all seeming  
Vanished is the vision.  
Was it only dreaming?  
Earth is still my prison?

Once you smiled upon me  
When you bade me follow:  
Now the mist clings round me  
And the laugh rings hollow.

Love that's born of Springtime—  
Can you not remember?—  
Why must it perish 'mid  
Snows of dim December?

Was is not at Winter that  
Vigil and scorning ;  
Mary at the manger side,  
Love born in the morning ?

Shall Winter's empery  
Rule our kingdom ?  
Ah, let Love's sun arise,  
Presage the Spring come.

Will you not tell me  
What it means to love you ?  
Still it may be Paradise  
In the Heaven above you.

## SIR BRANDRETH

SIR BRANDRETH rode fast with his  
knights at his side  
O'er the causeway awash with the incom-  
ing tide.

Then spurred he full swiftly to bridge  
and to gate.

“Sweet Mary have mercy ! Who knock-  
eth so late ?”

“Now haste thee, sir porter, the gateway  
unbar :

'Tis Sir Brandreth thy Lord, newly home  
from the war.”

“God keep us, Sir Brandreth ; scarce an  
hour is gone

Thou didst smite on the wicket and pass  
in alone :

“In the light of the torches thine armour  
shone red,  
Thou didst reel on the threshold as one  
sore bestéd.”

“Thou ravest, sir porter! ’Tis years  
twain or more  
Since I passed o’er the causeway from  
yonder far shore.

“Go bid Lady Avice and Richard my  
son” —  
“Sir Brandreth, Sir Brandreth, their life’s  
course is run.”

Who calleth so loud from the sands through  
the night?  
Now Jesu have pity! The tide’s near its  
height.

Then out laughed Sir Brandreth full loud  
at the call:

“Bid my wraith then stay dwell in my  
desolate hall;

“And the Devil’s own curse light on  
castle and bower,  
On steed and on rider for aye from this  
hour!”

“Hark! The fiend cryeth loud” quoth  
Sir Brandreth in glee:

“An he lack him his supper, he is welcome  
to me.”

Sir Brandreth turned sharply his steed,  
and he rode  
Back into the night and the wild rushing  
flood.

All white to the heavens the billows are  
tossed.  
Sweet Mary have mercy on souls that are  
lost!

## THE RAILWAY CUTTING

**H**AREBELL and heather and daisy,  
Hearken their call to the dance !  
Away with all imps that be lazy ;  
Moonlight and evening entrance.

Here is broom to be rid of things creepy,  
And thyme for the little bare feet :  
Poppies so red but so sleepy !  
Mallow and campion neat.

Look ! The moon's smiling and winking ;  
Cloudlets go streaming away ;  
Once she's awake she'll be thinking  
It jolly to join in the play.

Time for a change in our measure :  
The flowers are dancing themselves :  
The goblins are grinning for pleasure :  
So quick to it, fairies and elves !

28 THE RAILWAY CUTTING

Where the embankment slopes down in  
the cutting

Hideous monsters affright not a whit !  
Let them come raging and shrieking and  
butting,  
Into the bracken we merrily flit.

Poor stupid mortals cooped up in those  
boxes,  
Just as we spy them through windows  
alight,  
Fastened like pheasant chicks fearful of  
foxes,  
Peering so dismally into the night !

Children's pale faces glide by us appealing  
(Why ! Here's a bee spiked its wing  
on a thorn !

Bind it up softly for mending and healing)  
Come then and dance with us, play-  
mates, till morn.

Hark ! Here's the muttering, quivering,  
rumbling !  
Jock-a-Limb's climbing the top of the  
post !



THE RAILWAY CUTTING 29

Stick to it, Jock-a-Limb, else you'll come  
tumbling!

Up flies the signal on Jock's nose a'most.

Here's a wee shrew been disturbed from  
her slumber

Scampering madly, an urchin astride:

Pixies and elves peeping shy without  
number:

Come on, you fellows! a goat for a  
ride!

Search for a glowworm to carry our ladies:

Who's for the seaside? Bring quick  
from our hoard

Under the rowan-tree hid, where the  
shade is,

Gossamer - wrappings, and see 'em  
aboard.

Light up the lanterns! Now, elves, take  
your places!

What? A wren's twitter? The night  
nearly done?

See! Mortals yawning! What ugly  
grimaces!

Farewell to our revels: but, oh, they  
*were* fun.

## ST LEVAN

**S**URGE and fret of the foam,  
Foam of the western sea leaping  
In billows charging to shore  
With rushing and furious roar,  
And manes wind-blown  
Of spray wrack-strown,  
Raging and hungry with death in their  
keeping ;  
Cataracts tossing on high  
Till rocks and ramparts and sky  
Are lost in a whirling confusion of white  
And pale flecked green in the dying  
light,  
Storm of mid-winter ne'er lulling to rest  
The heaving of ocean's wild passionate  
breast,  
Greedy, ah greedy, to whelm and  
destroy  
Gaunt hardy mariner, pale weary  
boy,  
Buffeted seaward, drifting to shore,  
Where, evermore,

Cruelties of castled and pinnacled rock,  
Jaggéd and streaming and glistening, mock  
Sailor and helmsman, and savage confound

The cries of despair

That call from their lair

Cormorants gluttoned with flesh of the  
drowned :

Ah, shall the ship reach home ?

## BY THE CORNISH SEA

THE granite cliffs are cleft by  
    caverns deep ;  
The purple heather decks the clinging  
    grass  
Where castled rocks in sun-bathed  
    dreaming sleep ;  
Swift o'er the restless sea shadows of  
    hurrying seamews pass,  
Crying their wild and ever plaintive  
    note  
As spirits of lost mariners in quest,  
From cruel reef and perilous ways  
    remote,  
Of quiet land-encircled graves where they  
    may be at rest.

Far shores, beyond the meeting-place  
    of day and night,  
Oceanus' circling stream, Calypso's  
    caverned isle,  
Beyond his ken, defiant of the storm's  
    affright,

Of Laestrygonian horror or Sirens' sweet  
 alluring guile,  
 Harvestless wine-dark sea, enchant-  
 ment-breathing land,  
 Till green Hermæus' steep the keen  
 Phæacian hails,  
 Soft lays the toil-spent warrior on his  
 long-sought strand,  
 And hoists anew to catch the favouring  
 breeze his crimsoned sails.

Perchance here once some black  
 Sidonian keel  
 With dark-envisaged treacherous  
 hardy crew  
 Half trader and half pirate, at the  
 appeal  
 Of fond adventure marked with white the  
 troubled waters blue,  
 Seeking the fabled Cassiterides,  
 Pearls of great price, rich treasures  
 ocean-born,  
 Weaving them tales of fancy's melodies,  
 The Nereids' coronal of song and Triton's  
 ominous horn.

But hark ! The music of soft-ringing  
 chimes

Is mingled with the surge's deeper  
note ;

The very waves whisper of faery times  
When Arthur's chivalry rode forth and  
giant tyrants smote

In headlong flight beyond the hidden  
marge

Of Lyonesse, or e'er the heathen rout  
Swept down anew with myriad axe  
and targe

As some wild Scythian horseman, flashing  
lance and brandished knout.

Then where the din of hideous battle  
raged

O'er peaceful hamlets, prayer-built  
lonely cells,

The savage ranged, his blood-thirst  
unassuaged,

Though in wild tocsin swayed the clamor-  
ous and despairing bells,

Till in their last and hopeless agony

The people lifted hands to God in  
prayer,

Who in His mercy bade the pitying  
sea

Flood o'er the fragrant thyme-set fields of  
Lyonesse the fair.

Galleot and galleon, caravel and sloop,  
 Moving up channel with the flowing  
 tide,  
 Their ordnance ready trimmed, and  
 at the poop  
 The embroidered flags of Spain flaunting  
 their challenge proud, defied  
 The granite cliffs and England's  
 wooden walls,  
 But soon a lurid night of storm shall  
 see  
 Yards flying loose, hulls rent, and  
 shattering squalls  
 Hurling them doom-wards, priest and slave  
 and frustrate chivalry.

As some great cliff its massive crest  
 uprears  
 Above the fury of the treacherous gale  
 Where the sea-eagle nests her brood,  
 nor fears  
 The angry clutching waves which vain her  
 timorous young assail,  
 So England, Mother, our hearts go  
 out to thee  
 Calm in thy patience 'mid grim envy's  
 hate,

36 BY THE CORNISH SEA

Ruler and Queen of this our western  
sea,  
Of strength unshaken, yea of ageless fame  
inviolate.



## LAMORNA BAY

THE wraith of the mist round the head-  
land curled  
With her winding-sheet for the dead un-  
furled,  
Talons outstretched for the mariner bold,  
To clutch him a drownèd corpse and  
cold,  
And fling him below to depths untold ;  
And the billows on high were madly hurled  
In a riotous fury of glee, the day  
That the Rolf went down in Lamorna  
Bay.

Then merrily laughed the storm-king grim  
At booty so rich lightly tossed to him,  
And his call shrilled over the ocean bed :  
“ Speed, brothers, speed, for the feast is  
spread,  
And we glut our maws this night on the  
dead.”  
As the cry died moaning in caverns dim

From their lairs sprang the fiends all  
gaunt and grey  
When the Rolf went down in Lamorna  
Bay.

But a shaft of light smote quivering home  
To the waving weeds and the deep green  
gloom ;  
And the goblin-rout all shuddering flies,  
While the mariner sleeps with closed  
eyes  
Till the last great day, when the cry  
“ Arise ! ”  
Shall ring down the vault of Heaven’s  
dome,  
And the sorrowful sea give up her prey,  
The dead that were drowned in Lamorna  
Bay.

## AT NIGHT

**A**S some lone watcher through the  
anxious night  
Sees o'er the darkened infinite of sea  
Move swiftly by a light on unseen ship  
Faring afar to haven long desired  
And vanish sudden round the headland dim  
Whose outline strikes a blur athwart the  
stars,  
So doth this little life of troubled man  
Illumine with faint gleam a moment chos'n  
From out eternity's unseen content  
Then pass forever to forgotten peace.

## SURGE OF THE SEA

THE "Golden Day" set sail to the west  
(O the murmuring song of the surge  
of the sea)

And they waved her good luck, ay, luck  
of the best

As she cleared from the harbour 'mid  
laughter and jest,

And the waves leapt up in answering glee.

The waves leapt up in answering glee  
(O the unquiet cry of the surge in the  
west)

When the "Golden Day" shook her sails  
out free

And dipped from sight o'er the brim of the  
sea :

But their hearts were sad that loved her  
the best.

Their hearts were sad that loved her well  
(O the desolate moan of the surge of the  
sea)

For the wind came chasing the leaping swell  
As it chafed and fretted the tossing bell  
Ringing of hidden and jagged teeth,  
All hungry for prey, of the reef beneath  
(O flee from the perilous surge, O flee !)

The sun went down in a glory of red  
(O the sorrowful call of the surge of the  
sea)

And darkness arose from its ocean bed,  
The darkness that shrouds the lost and the  
dead :

Now God have mercy on you and me,  
And guard us both from the surge of the  
sea,

The pitiless song of the surge of the sea.

## THE PASSAGE OF LIFE

“**B**RIGHT morn, summer morn,  
Flashing and gleaming  
Over the golden corn  
While earth lies dreaming,  
Strong with our work to cope  
Call us untiring,  
Child’s hope, man’s hope,  
Courage inspiring.”

I sate at edge of an enchanted wood  
Where, laughing softly, to the day  
there ran  
A rivulet in happy solitude  
Unscathed by footprint of unquiet man;  
Beyond, through archèd spaces, mid the  
oak-trees’ shade  
The sunlit waters of a far-seen lake  
displayed  
Their shining blue by silent marge which  
fairy feet had kissed,  
And flung their challenge merrily to the  
wraiths of the mountain mist.

Soon gleeful laughter echoed through  
the trees,  
And a gay band of children I  
espied,  
Their tresses loosely floating on the  
breeze  
With nimble feet mocking the elfin's  
pride  
In jocund revelry come dancing by the  
rill  
On sward with bluebell gay and nodding  
daffodil,  
Or flushing hyacinth chiming gentle bells  
in shy delight  
To call the timorous dryad to the glade in  
pleased affright.

As in old time the master craftsman's  
hand  
Wrought children's music out of  
sculptured stone,  
And still all sweetly chants the angelic  
band  
To harp and psaltery their antiphon  
"Laudate Dominum in cithara," again  
"In cymbalis laudate" swells the ex-  
ultant strain

44 THE PASSAGE OF LIFE

Till the imprisoned music breaks free from  
its marble shrine  
As boyish voices heavenward raise their  
canticle divine.

---

“ Deep noon, ruddy noon,  
Hot on the mountains,  
Parching the grasses soon,  
Quelling the fountains,  
Spare thou the burnt soil  
Lest all we cherish,  
Child’s toil, man’s toil,  
Fruitlessly perish.”

Scarce had the children’s laughter died  
away  
And playful Echo stayed her answer-  
ing call,  
Youth in his strength came riding  
sturdily,  
With maiden blush and resolute heart  
withal ;  
In quest of war and honour’s meed in  
haste he spurred  
Where beckoning heights and black  
stern crags allured ;



Though toil be his and peril's threat,  
 though guile's caress ensnare,  
 If not to conquer ere life end, yet resolute  
 to dare.

But now the sun climbed high in  
 heaven's dome,  
 The weary flowers bowed their heavy  
 heads ;  
 As on some rockbound shore the line  
 of foam  
 Alone marks Ocean's heaving, as it  
 spreads  
 A curving fringe of white the slumbering  
 cliffs along,  
 While mariners drift idly and hushed  
 the billow's song :  
 So round the forest's vesture dark em-  
 broidery of light  
 Ran gleaming, as the path of stars girdles  
 the brooding night.

Sudden the silence broke, for ringing  
 mail  
 With clash of arms resounded through  
 the glade,  
 As down the woodland path knight  
 Percivale,

46 THE PASSAGE OF LIFE

In armour dint by many a blow  
arrayed,  
Rode swift to right the wrong and evil  
to redress  
In manhood's strong simplicity of hardi-  
ness  
Before the shadows lengthened and the  
hurrying daylight fled  
Beyond the darkening mountain ridge  
where the Sangreal shone rose-red.

---

“Cold wind, cruel wind,  
Merciless straining,  
Hearest not, unkind,  
Nature's complaining?  
Driving the mist and snow  
Swift to obey thee,  
Child's foe, man's foe,  
When wilt thou stay thee?”

Then stormy evening lit with amethyst  
The fronting crags, whose precipices  
wild  
Upsprang in massive armoury, nor wist  
Of pity's pleading, stark and unbe-  
guiled,

And o'er the sullen frowning crests the  
Imperial moon  
Moved stately slow to coming Empery,  
and soon  
Over reluctant day night flung her mantle  
flowing free,  
And the voice of the rivers sang her sway  
in hidden melody.

Then through the forest greedy Death  
came hasting  
In likeness of a lean and panting hound,  
His avid jaws agape, already tasting  
Remembered joys of slaughter and of  
wound :  
The gnarlèd oaks all shuddering spied  
his furtive tread  
While chilling blasts from festering  
charnel heaps of dead  
Smote broken boughs red-flecked and sere  
afar in wild dismay  
Where gluttonous sped on swooping wing  
his talon'd birds of prey.

O hungry death, that followeth life  
so fast  
And marrest marriage feast with  
funeral knell,

48 THE PASSAGE OF LIFE

Commingling present grief with  
pleasure past,  
Who may thy pitiless hunting bold  
repel?  
I marked thy trackings over barren fell  
and dale;  
The thronging phantoms join thine army  
of assail;  
And shivering Night drew closer yet her  
heavy sable pall  
Lest the angel of doom should sheathe his  
sword and the ripe ears cease to  
fall.

---

“Calm eve, quiet eve,  
Ere comes the morrow,  
Life from its woe retrieve  
Burden and sorrow;  
Dreaming, thy peace confest,  
Lie croft and shieling;  
Child’s rest, man’s rest,  
Grant us thy healing.”

Long brooded stillness: black it was  
and dread  
As when the seer defied Meremptah’s  
pride

And darkness, shadowless and awful,  
spread  
At Jahveh's bidding over Nilus' tide ;  
Dark as in Ocean's fathomless un-  
plumbèd deep  
The naked rocks Archæan night eternal  
keep,  
Dark as was Chaos' timeless void before  
God spake the word  
And on the waters' face there moved the  
Spirit of the Lord.

At length a whisper through the  
forest went,  
The herald of the dawn, at whose  
behest  
The veil of darkness in the East was  
rent,  
And, as of old to guide the sacred  
quest,  
Pearl of the Orient silver-set shone out  
the star.  
Crimson and gold, like Seraph bands all  
dight for war  
The rays of morning glancing pierced and  
smote the distant ridge  
Where a stream leapt white in a purple  
gulf spanned by a rainbow bridge.

Then to the sound of music deep and  
chant,  
The vanquisher of Death and Night,  
Love came.  
All blithely sang the birds; the  
fragrant plant  
And flowers in multitudinous acclaim  
Hailed Him as victor: worn and pale  
his brow, yet glad  
With solemn joy which knew nor sorrow  
left nor shade;  
For the song of the redeemed was the  
crown of Love's emprise,  
And woodland, lake, and mountain, ante-  
room of Paradise.

---

“Strength of the mountain height,  
Torrent-scarred, lonely,  
Myriad waters bright  
Known to thee only,  
Wind's assault, storm's blast,  
Bravely defying,  
Thine be our strength at last,  
Living or dying!”

## EARTH TOKENS

O EARTH, gaunt Earth,  
The storm is raging 'neath rent  
    skies,  
The bare hill-side is lashed with rain,  
The torrent's cry of savage pain  
Voices the mountain's agonies ;  
The hideous darkness mocks the gaze ;  
The greedy shifting moss ensnares ;  
The levin-brand that lurid glares  
Naught but the naked rock displays.  
    In night our souls enthralling  
    And bitterness appalling,  
    Chasm to chasm calling,  
Shall life be worth the striving,  
Our toiling, our contriving,  
    Of any worth ?

O Earth, fair Earth,  
The wind sweeps o'er thy mountain side,  
The pine is mirrored in the lake  
And bracken rich and heather make

A joyance gay where dreams abide ;  
Yonder the road dips o'er the brow,  
    When purple hills and setting sun  
    The wanderer warn of journey done,  
To hamlet in the vale below.

    When all thy soul lies dreaming,  
    Thy face of heaven seeming,  
    Thy smile our hearts redeeming,  
Shall joy not conquer sighing,  
Strength weariness, and dying  
    Again be birth ?



## AT CARLISLE

**B**EYOND the river's bound, which  
floweth grey  
And desolate towards the lonely sea,  
The lights shine faintly out at close of  
day  
From Border lands, where once the rover  
free  
In olden days had shuddered to espy  
The Norman's citadel and battlement  
Upsoaring grimly to the hostile sky,  
Then fearful back his gloomy way he  
went.

The sombre clouds hang heavy, leaden-  
hued ;  
The grey roofs of the ancient town below  
Glisten with rain fresh fallen, as imbued  
With pity's tears for poverty and woe  
Haunting these narrow streets, whose  
children, pale,  
Barefooted, ragged, hungry, noisy, wait

To see if aught men's charity avail  
And Dives reck of Lazarus at his gate.

Here once the Highland clansman fierce,  
too leal

To that unhappy Royal race, whose  
bane

It was to win men's love and, winning,  
feel

Such gratitude as squandered it in vain,  
Had roamed, now victor, now in panic  
flight

From Derby with the English following  
fleet,

And cressets flaring lit the troubled  
night,

While pipes rang shrilly in that wild re-  
treat.

Then brandished arms despairing menaced  
God

As, passing by the quiet Minster's  
shade

Where once their vaunting steps in triumph  
trod,

They saw the autumn of their hopes dis-  
played ;

And where the trees dropt yellowing  
leaves they heard

No more the shout of welcome's joyous  
cry :

Only the dank and ominous air was stirred  
By music's melancholy psalmody.

Like to a vision in a forest dreamt

By northern lakeside, so in haste they  
came

A troop of warriors weary, all unkempt,  
Fast through the silent town, with angry  
shame

Bright burning on their foreheads; and  
behind

Meseemed there followed grimly, wreathed  
in crape,

A figure ghostly, axe and cord to bind,  
Grisly and noiseless, mocking such escape.

. . . . .

Within the Minster walls this lonely  
eve,

Which fain would flash to sunset with  
their glow

Of rose-red stone, men's busy thoughts  
may weave

Texture of fancy's dreams of long ago,

When to the rushing wings of Gabriel,  
 The maid in adoration lowly bent ;  
 For sudden breaks upon the silence' spell  
 A boy's soft treble, clear and confident !

O surely Paradise seemed incomplete,  
 And God lacked somewhat of His perfect  
     joy  
 Though Seraphim and Cherubim should  
     greet  
 Their Maker with undying song's employ  
 In choral grandeur solemn, throbbing  
     deep  
 Through aisles of Heaven : then the Father  
     smiled  
 At hearkening earth's voices, and bade  
     keep  
 Place in His choir for a little child.

. . . . .  
 Again we pass without the Minster  
     walls ;  
 The windows darken ; hushed the voice  
     of prayer ;  
 Of time and hopeless circumstance poor  
     thralls,  
 Nor yet eternity's fruition share ;

When down the street fierce-swept by  
lashing rain  
In sodden garb, yet glad with earnest  
gaze  
Comes to rebuke our little faith and vain  
A company of singers to God's praise.

O song of faith in world grown bitter  
cold,  
O trusting hearts that span the ages old,  
In yon far Syrian town beside the lake  
Where Christ His thronging hearers' thirst  
did slake  
With streams of living water aye, and fed  
Their hunger with Himself, of life the  
Bread,  
How would thy faith have bid His anguish  
cease,  
Thy love have found His love, thy trust  
his peace!

O country far, where we had lost our  
way  
Spending our portion given heedlessly,  
Our squandered hours as broken potsherds  
flung  
Remorselessly Time's wastage heaps  
among,

God all forgotten—when the need was  
    come  
Stumbling and faint we turned us back  
    for home ;  
While we were yet a great way off, the  
    Christ,  
Seeing, had pity, and His love sufficed.

## THE FULNESS OF LIFE

FOAMING and wrack of the tide,  
Cold light of a wintry sun,  
Labour, yesterday's pride,  
Ended, yet scarce begun :

White-capped billows that fret  
Rocks of a wreck-strewn shore,  
Joy that knew not regret  
Now lost evermore :

Athwart the surge and the wind  
The fisher-bird speedeth alone,  
Lonely as soul that has sinned  
And reapeth its own.

Vain as beat of the sea,  
Empty as moorland mist,  
Such the vision of life to me  
Until filled by Christ.

Then colours sprang out o'er the deep,  
A glory of light lit the foam,  
The waves sank softly on sleep,  
And the storm-tossed ship came home.



## THE VOICE OF THE HILLS

**Y**ONDER the waterfall, child of crag  
and mountain,  
Cleaves the cold mist and from its fetters  
freed  
Leaps bright and clear to plenish pool and  
fountain  
Down to earth's crying, hearkening her  
need.

Deep in the bosom of the fells its spring-  
ing,  
Rushes and moss its cradle, and for  
song  
Wind's deep rejoicing, down it foameth,  
bringing  
Cleansing for foulness, purity for wrong.

Man in the low land, spent with toil, mis-  
trusting  
Whether there be a God to pity pain,  
His heaven but gloom, and devils beneath  
it lusting  
For souls and bodies, sold alike for gain :

62 THE VOICE OF THE HILLS

Refuse and mire, filth and desolation,  
Pillars of smoke by day and fire by  
night,  
Guiding the chosen children of the nation  
Swift to their promised country of de-  
light :

Ruby and sapphire, emerald resplendent :  
Ruby for heart's blood shed of Mam-  
mon's slaves ;  
Sapphire for pride's magnificence ascen-  
dent ;  
Emerald the grass above its victims'  
graves :

Faint on the horizon, when the eve is fall-  
ing,  
Yet may he mark the purple line of hills,  
Hear in the silence, vanished hopes recall-  
ing,  
Voice of the mountains, music of the  
rills.

Surely the mountains answer him, con-  
fessing  
Faithless his weariness craving but re-  
lease,

“ God giveth strength to Man for wrong’s  
redressing,  
Then at the last His own reward of  
peace.”

## O. FORTUNATOS

“ Neque ille  
Aut doluit miserans inopem aut invidit habenti.”

ONLY the clouds of heaven above  
them, only the moorland spread  
below :

What should they know of the city's needs  
who only the mountains' loneliness  
know ?

---

Down in the lowlands manhood toiling,  
womanhood grieving, roar and fret,  
Hunger and crime and despair their  
counsellor, wealth and misery, yoke-  
fellows yet ;

Childhood sobbing its wants unheeded ;  
boyhood robbed of its chance of life ;  
Mammon flinging contemptuous morsels to  
ruined maiden and shrinking wife ;

Riches flaunting on dusty highways ; slime  
or stench of the sun-scorched slum ;  
Smoke-grimed chimney and reeking alley,  
foetid gutter and noisome gloom :

What is the birthright of England's boy-  
hood, Lord of the Manor and King of  
the Mart ?

Have you no fields you could give for  
their playing ? Have you no pleasures  
to give for their part ?

---

Singer belovéd of pasture and hamlet,  
ploughshare and vintage and children  
and kine,  
All the affection and beauty and wonder,  
passion and glory of Italy thine :

Thou knewest anger for poverty's suffer-  
ing : thou knewest longing for riches  
to save

(Ah, if the wealthy would hearken the  
crying !) some of thy children from  
pain or the grave :

Thou turnedst entrancéd away from the  
sobbing, singing thy haven from fury  
and fear—

Peace of the countryside, joy of the peasant,  
the lowing of cattle, the husbandman's  
cheer.

Wouldst thou enchant us, O singer eternal,  
here in the silence and calm of the  
hills,

In thine all-merciful love for all living  
blinding our eyes to humanity's ills ?

Could not thy wonderful pity and passion  
find other solace for evil and wrong,  
Or didst thou leave this the burden of  
sorrow to Him who should follow,  
the Child of thy song ?

Nay, but His voice soundeth faintly, how  
faintly ! heard 'mid the clanging of  
piston and rod :

“ Children, how hardly may they that  
trust riches seek to inherit the King-  
dom of God ! ”

---

Only the clouds of heaven above them,  
only the moorland spread below :  
What should they reckon of the city's needs  
who only the mountains' loveliness  
know ?

## THE ROSE

**T**HY scent a caress  
And thy touch a kiss,  
When Love stoops to earth  
There is joy at the birth  
In heaven no less  
I wis.

Red for the glory of pain  
Love suffered, and died ;  
But white for laughter  
Of joy thereafter,  
For sunshine through rain  
At Eastertide.

## ON CHRISTMAS EVE

THE glow of the sunset yields to eve ;  
The robin sings  
A moment, then hushes, for night to weave  
Sad imaginings.

O'er the black of the beechwood gleams a  
star ;  
The wind is still,  
Lest its moan in the mystical twilight mar  
With presage of ill.

Out on the deepening night there glide  
Shadows of fear,  
As eddies athwart the roll of the tide  
By the sandhills drear.

To-morrow is hope for the world ? Yet  
first  
Come sorrow and pain ;  
And the bleached white desert is long  
athirst,  
Athirst for the rain.



To-morrow is joy for the world? Yet see,  
What hope of the birth  
Of the Joy-Child Christ, when that misery  
Broods o'er the earth?

The cradle so dimly seen, one saith,  
May be a bier,  
For the wings of the desolate Angel of  
Death  
Are passing near.

Dark night of the Timeless, thine embrace  
Close wraps us round:  
On the drifting and treacherous sand no  
trace  
Of the wanderer found!

Is it for ever in spectral quest  
Alone he strays?  
Who knows whether life or death be best  
This end of days?

Were the tidings of joy in the Angels' song,  
Or of grief and loss,  
Of friend's betrayal, of bitter wrong,  
O babe of the Cross?

To-morrow comes Love to the world, for  
a Child

Is born, a King?

Canst hear o'er the raging of waters wild  
The Birth-bells ring?

Love comes to His own? Do His own at  
least

Receive Him? Nay—

But—

Children are singing: there is light in  
the east:

It is Christmas Day.

## A WEST-COUNTRY CAROL

OUR night lay black, a'frowning,  
O'er the cruel crags o' the shore,  
When the star shone clear  
On the manger bare,  
Through the open door.

Our waves rushed in, a'foaming,  
From the driving storm all wild,  
When the Christmas night  
In the East was bright  
For love o' the Child.

Our sea-birds flew, a'crying  
Through the gale adrift with spray,  
When Mary prayed  
At the cradle head,  
Waiting for day.

Hadst come, babe Christ, to our West-land,  
The song of the dreaming deep,  
And its waves at rest  
Would have been the best  
To soothe Thy sleep.

72 A WEST-COUNTRY CAROL

Our fisher-lads, a'watching  
By the nets at yonder buoy,  
    Would have sung out clear  
    As the heavenly choir,  
For joy.

## IN EXETER COLLEGE CHAPEL

*The old King :*

I SEE the star gleaming :  
It shines as my gold ;  
'Tis age does the dreaming  
In winter's cold.

*The young King :*

I see the star burning :  
The gifts that I bring  
Glow as the returning  
Life in the Spring.

*The Eastern King :*

I see the star setting  
In fragrance rose-red ;  
My myrrh's for forgetting  
Night's sorrow dead.

*Cantant pueri :*

Shepherds and Monarchs and Angels, ye  
throng

Fast to the Star as it sinks in the West;  
Haste then with offerings, prayer, riches,  
song—

Which is the gift shall please Him the  
best?

Worship ye first, but we children come  
after;

Yours to bring jewels and frankincense  
old;

Mother and Child, will ye smile on our  
laughter,

Take love for rubies and carols for gold?

*Respondent omnes :*

Day may break drearily, life seem but loss;  
Christ sends the vision again for one  
hour:

Prayers rise wearily; riches are dross;  
How shall song lose its power?

See, in His garden the flowers are spring-  
ing:

Say ye “ He leaves us; we toil in the  
wild

Lonely, forsaken" ?—Nay, hark to the  
singing,  
Christ newly-born in the joy of each  
child.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

**S**NOW on the hills, and a grey north  
wind ;  
A dull sea smoking with wisps of mist ;  
And a cold sun striving in vain to find  
Its way to an earth it long since kissed :

Ah, where is the warmth and the love and  
desire  
Of summer's own home in our land of  
the West ?  
Grown chill and old, as the old year's quire  
Of song a dirge, and our faith a jest.

---

Night falls on the dying year, its wings  
Are heavy with sorrow : the dark sea  
heaves  
With sullen complaint on the shore where  
springs  
No life save of weed the sodden leaves.

Then a whisper, a rift in the pall of cloud,  
A murmur and answering call from the  
sea,



And the hush of despair is ended : aloud  
Shouts the wind of the west in its  
mastery.

Sweep the heavens, O wild west wind, in  
thy chase  
Of the clouds to their lair in the Eastern  
gloom :  
The year is renewed in thy mighty embrace,  
Doubt turned to triumph, and God our  
own.

AVE ATQUE VALE

**I**RON and angry red,  
The glow of a molten sky :  
All men are born  
To wrath and scorn :  
And then—to die.

Silver and shining grey,  
A gleam on the lake's still breast :  
From strife comes peace,  
From grief, release :  
And then—long rest.

Azure and glowing gold,  
The rainbow dawn on the height :  
The life of man  
Lasts a moment's span :  
And then—comes light.



PRINTED BY  
TURNBULL AND SPEARS  
EDINBURGH



This book is DUE on the last  
date stamped below.

10M-11-50(2555)470

REMINGTON RAND INC. 20

**THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES**

PR Henderson

6015 At Oxford

H381a

PR  
6015  
H381a

